



Create a Bird-friendly Habitat



Birding is the number one sport in America. Get started by observing birds in your own bird-friendly wildlife habitat.

For lists of bird species that may be helped by your bird-friendly habitat – whether it is urban, suburban, or rural – visit the website audubonathome.org.

- **Provide water year-round** - A simple birdbath is a great start. Change water every 2-3 days in warm weather to prevent mosquito larvae from hatching and use a heater in the winter. Place the water container about 10 feet from dense shrubs or other cover that predators may use.
- **Install native plants** - Select a variety of native plants to offer year-round food in the form of seeds, berries, nuts, and nectar. Try to recreate the plant ecosystem native to your area. Evergreen trees and shrubs provide excellent cover through all seasons, if they are part of your local ecosystem. The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center has lists of recommended native plants by region and state at www.wildflower.org/collections.
- **Remove invasive plants from your wildlife habitat** - Many invasive plants out-compete the native species favored by birds, insects and other wildlife. To find a list of invasive plants in your state go to the USDA Plants Database at plants.usda.gov/java/noxiousDriver (case-sensitive URL) or speak with your local Cooperative Extension Office, which you can find at www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/index.html.
- **Eliminate insecticides in your yard** - Insects are the primary source of food for many bird species and are an important source of protein and fats for growing juvenile birds.
- **Keep standing dead trees** - Standing dead trees (also known as ‘snags’) provide cavity-dwelling places for birds to raise young and a source of insects for food. Many species will also seek shelter from bad weather inside

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these hollowed out trees. Inspect your snags regularly to make sure they do not present any safety hazards.

- **Put out nesting boxes** - Make sure the boxes have ventilation holes near the top (but not in the roof, or water will leak in) and drainage holes below. Do not use a box with a perch, as house sparrows are known to sit on a nesting box perch and peck at other birds inside the nesting box. Be sure to monitor the boxes for invasive animal species such as European starlings or house sparrows, which are known to harm or outcompete native species.
- **Build a brush pile in a corner of your yard** - Start with larger logs and top with smaller branches. Some birds will hunt, roost or even nest in brush piles.
- **Offer food in feeders** - Bird feeders are great sources of supplemental food during times of food scarcity, and also enhance bird viewing opportunities.
- **Keep your cat indoors** - Domestic cats kill millions of birds every year.
- **Reduce your lawn area** - Lawns have little value to birds or other wildlife, and they require more energy for mowing, applying fertilizers and watering.
- **Observe and identify your bird visitors** - Find tips about birding and how to identify the birds in your habitat at www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/birding123.



Visit www.nwf.org/gardenforwildlife for more information.

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